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Senate passes package supporting state parks

LANSING – Michigan’s state parks would receive more funding under three bills passed today by the Senate.

The State Parks Initiative package is sponsored by Sens. Tony Stamas, R-Midland; Jason Allen, R- Traverse City; and Patty Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township.

Senate Bill 1279 would implement an income tax return check-off for donations to the state park system. The bill would allow Michigan taxpayers to donate a contribution of \$2 or more of their refunds to the Michigan State Park Endowment Fund.

SB 1281 would create an awards program recognizing a state park of the year, state park volunteer of the year and state park employee of the year.

“Michigan is a natural treasure,” said Stamas, sponsor of SB 1281. “It is extremely important to support and help protect our state parks for future generations to enjoy.”

SB 1280 would set in statute the formation of a State Parks Advisory Committee. The State Parks Advisory Committee would help guide the state park system by providing recommendations to the Legislature, governor and Natural Resources Commission on management, planning and improvements for state parks.

The committee also would be in charge of selecting the award recipients each year. The 17-member committee would be appointed by the director of the Department of Natural Resources with the advice and consent of the Natural Resources Commission.

“As residents of this great state, we should all be concerned with keeping our state parks clean and pristine,” Stamas said. “These bills provide residents with incentives and opportunities to get involved and volunteer, or make a donation. Our parks are one of Michigan’s greatest natural beauties and together we can help make sure they stay that way.”

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